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TAGS: [PRGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [CJAN](#) [KJUS](#) [LI](#)  
SUBJECT: LIBERIA'S PRS: PEACE AND SECURITY PILLAR - A  
SECURITY STRATEGY IS SLOWLY EMERGING

Classified By: Ambassador Donald E. Booth for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Liberian National Security Strategy, upon which the security section of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is based, has not yet been made public, but the GOL is moving ahead on the basis of the strategy. The PRS process has forced the Liberians to begin to plan long-term, and while progress has been made, more effort and resources are needed to make the Liberia National Police a viable force. The Liberians are working to strengthen the greatest weakness of the security section of the PRS -- the costing -- but that should not detract from the overall success of the process so far. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) paper on Consolidating Peace and Security is based primarily on the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia (NSSRL), which has been approved by President Sirleaf, but has not yet been published or made public. However, the PRS text was drawn from the draft NSSRL, and the Priority Action Matrix is closely aligned with the NSSRL Implementation Matrix (NSSRL-IM).

¶3. (C) The relative ease of preparing the security sector portion of the PRS compared to the other pillars was the result of months of work of the Security Sector technical team. Originally, the task of writing a national security strategy was given to the Governance Commission (GC), and after months of delay, the GC produced an essentially unusable document. The UN brought in a British security expert to work on the strategy, who worked with the Liberian technical team to draft a second strategy paper, with direct engagement by Ambassador and by former SRSG Doss, the team developed a strategy that reflects the proposals contained in the Rand report "Making Liberia Safe: Transformation of the National Security Sector." The technical team then "merged" the two drafts, using much of the text of the GC draft, but keeping the actual strategy of the team's draft.

¶4. (C) Of greatest contention was the decision to make part of the strategy to streamline the law enforcement and intelligence functions. The merged draft eliminated the Ministry of National Security, merging those functions with the National Security Agency, with the NSA becoming the lead intelligence agency. It also planned for the elimination the National Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Agency, and folding those functions into the Liberia National Police (LNP). The GC argued that competing agencies would limit the power of any one agency, and in any event, more discussion was needed. However, consolidation of these organizations made it into the NSSRL and the PRS.

¶5. (SBU) During the county consultation phase of the PRS process, roads, education and health were the main focus of discussions. However, underpinning those discussions was an assumption the GOL would provide for security, especially the ability of the LNP to enforce the law without abusing human

rights or corruption. The Liberians participating in the discussions made clear their safety was crucial to their well-being.

¶16. (SBU) The Security Pillar includes several agencies and services. The USG has played a major role in three of those, with a leading role in The Armed Forces of Liberia and the Special Security Service (SSS -- the President's protective service), and a contributor to the LNP, and especially a leadership role in the formation of a new SWAT-like Emergency Response Unit (ERU). Other agencies include the National Security Agency, the National Fire Service, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, and the Corrections Service.

-- AFL: The PRS does not single out contributions of individual donors, and therefore does not note the central role the USG has played in developing the new AFL. It does, however, keep to the timeline of creating a 2,000 soldier force by 2010, and calls for the creation of a Coast Guard within the three-year PRS period.

-- LNP: The PRS calls for the creation of a police Civilian Oversight Board by December 2008 as well as the formation of the ERU by December 2009.

-- SSS: The PRS does not provide for any specific goals for the SSS, but the agency is included in several initiatives to streamline operations and reduce overlapping functions.

¶17. (C) The Security Pillar has moved forward on a costing exercise based on the NSSRL-IM, and will present the results at the Liberia 2008 Poverty Reduction Forum in Berlin. The

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recently completed exercise shows a three-year costing of the security sector of nearly \$376.8 million, which is substantially above the \$252.4 million projected in the PRS. The new costing exercise, while much more thought out than the one-line figure in the PRS, is as much a wish list as an analysis of priorities given expected budgetary constraints and limits in donor support, or a reflection of existing donor commitments, such as for training and equipping the AFL. For example, the National Fire Service costed for six fire engines and 10 ambulances, none of which are presently funded.

¶18. (SBU) The stark contrast of the two figures should not lead one to assume that to PRS itself is flawed. The PRS and NSSRL processes were running in parallel, but in harmony and that the Security Pillar was not able to meet the PRS deadline is not fatal.

¶19. (C) Several initiatives, such as the consolidation of agencies and the creation of a Coast Guard, require legislative actions, and both the National Security and Intelligence Act and the National Defense Act remain stuck in the Legislature. Several lawmakers have told us they wish to see the NSSRL before acting on any legislation, and we understand that the Legislature is not happy with some aspects of the National Defense Act.

#### CHALLENGES AHEAD

¶10. (C) The withdrawal of UNMIL is linked to Liberia's ability to assume its own security. Further donor support is needed to avoid a longer than anticipated high level UNMIL presence, or a departure of UNMIL that results in instability. The NSSRL and PRS processes have been good catalysts for planning within Liberian security agencies for the next three years. After the Forum in Berlin, the Liberians will need to move forward in their planning. Specific issues needing to be addressed are:

-- Legislation: The Legislature needs to move forward quickly on security legislations. Its inaction is holding up our ability to begin assistance on creating a new Coast

Guard. Efforts to streamline intelligence and law enforcement services are also stymied.

-- Prioritization: Agencies will need to accept that the funding for their proposals will not be limitless, so they will need to prioritize their needs, and perhaps find ways to share resources, such as vehicle repair and communications. Capacity building is another area that can be shared. Some skills, like financial management, can be taught through existing civil service institutes.

-- Keep the pace up, but do not rush: Initial Entry Training will be completed for all 2,000 AFL soldiers in December. There is some pressure to accelerate the process to justify a more rapid UNMIL drawdown. Moving timelines at this point will be only counterproductive.

We see some positive signals these last few weeks that UNMIL and the GOL are serious about creating fundamental change in the LNP. Discussions are going on now (that frankly should have taken place a while ago) about the way forward. The UN is organizing a workshop in July to follow on the Berlin Forum, that should be a good opportunity to begin building a strategy. At the same time, we are cautioning our partners not to make hasty decisions that could in fact worsen the situation. All agree that the basic problem is command and control, both within the LNP command structure and in tasking to the field. This must be corrected immediately. We are about to arm a highly trained unit of police without the requisite command and control to ensure their proper use.

-- Increase Liberian ownership: The Liberians naturally look to partners for assistance in building their security apparatus. They then naturally complain of the powerlessness of their position. The PRS and NSSRL processes, though slow and with less than perfect results, is pushing the Liberians to think out their own destiny. We must continue to encourage this.

#### 11. (U) ERC Pillar

Ministry of Defense (Chair)  
Ministry of Justice  
Ministry of National Security  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Ministry of State

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Special Security Service  
National Security Agency  
Office of the National Security Advisor  
Liberia Reconstruction  
MOJ/Liberia National Police  
MOJ/Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization  
MOJ/Corrections Service  
MOJ/National Fire Service  
MOD/COIC

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